(c) if so, the comparative prices paid by other importing countries during the year 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The price at which wheat is imported by private sector varies from case to case depending on the international price and other relevant factors. The import price and quantity of wheat imported by Government during the year 2006 and 2007 for Central Pool is as under:-

Sl. No.	Year	Weighted average price (per MT)	Quantity (in lakh MT)
1	2006	Rs. 9,145.40	44.31
2	2007	Rs. 11,841.74	20.35

(b) No, Sir. The price paid by Government for the import of wheat during 2007 is only about 29 per cent higher than the previous year *i.e.* 2006.

(c) Does not arise.

Misuse and malpractice of PDS articles

40. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what are the extra measures taken in addition to the conventional system and procedure to correct and control the misuse and malpractice of PDS articles;

(b) what are the major areas of misuse and malpractice and the major articles on which such malpractices have been in vogue; and

(c) whether such practices have been due to system failure or human failure or both?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) In order to maintain supplies and securing availability and distribution of essential commodities, Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 was issued.

The Department of Food and Public Distribution got TPDS evaluated by ORG MARG. This evaluation covered the period of 2003-04 and 2004-05. The report received in 2005 mentioned diversion of 39% of rice and 53% of wheat under TPDS. The report mentioned that diversion was because of inclusion errors, leakages through ghost ration cards and pilferage during transportation and from Fair Price Shops.

To streamline functioning of TPDS, Government has taken a series of measures. Apart from regular monitoring and review with State/UT Governments, Government has been getting functioning of TPDS evaluated from time to time through independent agencies. To streamline functioning of TPDS, steps taken by Government are of four categories:

(i) For improving functioning of TPDS machinery, continuous reviews of lists of BPL and AAY families, door step delivery of foodgrains to fair price shops, timely availability of foodgrains at fair price shops and training of staff as well as vigilance committee members are being emphasized.

(ii) For greater transparency in functioning of TPDS, display of lists of BPL and AAY families at fair price shops, display of allocated quantities on web sites, adoption and implementation of revised Citizens Charter, monthly certification of delivery of foodgrains to fair price shops and their distribution to ration card holders, and taking up publicity-cum-awareness campaign have been initiated.

(iii) Improved vigilance at various levels and strict penal action against those involved in malpractices, including action against staff responsible for issuing ineligible ration cards and persons found in possession of such ration cards are being emphasized.

(iv) Introduction of new technologies such as Computerization of TPDS operation at various levels, smart-card-based delivery of essential commodities, use of global positioning system on vehicles transporting TPDS commodities and bar coding of ration cards etc. is being piloted.

As can be seen, required legal and institutional framework has been put in place. However, efficient operation of TPDS depends on capacity of the machinery managing it. Therefore, it may be stated that the deficiencies noticed in implementation of TPDS seem to be more because of shortcomings in the machinery.

Procurement of foodgrains

†41. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the estimate of rice and wheat production in the year 2007-08;

(b) the quantity of wheat and rice procured, so far, this year at minimum support price along with the details thereof; State-wise and grain-wise;

(c) whether the foodgrains purchased at this support price would be adequate to fulfil the demand for the year 2008-09; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to import wheat and rice this year and if so, the names of the countries from where the same has to be imported and at what price?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) As per the 4th Advance Estimate of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, the estimated production of rice and wheat in the crop year 2007-08 is 96.43 million tonnes and 78.40 million tonnes respectively.

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.